Secrets. II.-27—100,000—21-5-53.

M

Finance (1948) Department.

Ms SERIES.

G.O. No. Ms. 83

Dated 25-1-48

[Despatch Abstract.]

Registration Department- Reduction in the number of Sub-Registry Offices--papers Recorded.

Finance (Reorganisation) Department.

U.O. Note No. 53595A/47 Re-1 dated 16th September 1947.

Sub: Economies in expenditure.

...

Prior to the assumption of power by the Congress Ministry in 1937, the Government considered the possibility of effecting economies in expenditure and the following are some of the matters left over for the consideration of the new Government on which it appears, that final orders have not been passed.

(1) Closure of the Madras Forest College.
(2) Reduction in the number of Sub-Registry Offices.
(3) Reduction in the number of holidays.
(4) Reduction in the rates of travelling allowances to members of the new Legislature.
(5) Economies in contingent expenditure.

2. The Government have now decided to reconstitute the Retrenchment and Reorganisation Committee and it is proposed to place the above subjects before the Committee for its consideration. Departments of the Secretariat may be requested to state what steps, if any, were taken by the Government- subsequent to 1937 to effect economies in respect of the items specified in para 1 above and the extent to which economies can be effected immediately in the directions indicated.

T.N.S. Raghavan,
Additional Secretary to Government.

To the Revenue Department.
" Development Department.
" Public Department.
" Finance (C.S.R) Department.
" Finance (Exp.B) Department.

With enclosure

Forwarded / By Order.

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38. REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF SUB-REGISTRY OFFICES:- (Detailed note in Annexure G-V).- The percentage of expenditure to revenue in the Registration department is very high in this Province, being 93 per cent, while it is only 40 per cent in Bombay, 49 per cent in Bihar and Orissa and 43 per cent in Central Provinces. The main reason for this is that the number of sub-registry offices in Madras is high in proportion to the total number of registrations. The Government therefore considered the feasibility of reducing the number of sub-registry offices by having recourse to the following methods:-

(a) reducing the number of offices, where the work is comparatively light and transport facilities have increased in recent years, or alternatively to give them other work and make reductions in staff elsewhere;
(b) concentration of work (as for instance in the Madras City) in one or two offices, where such a course is possible;
(c) utilizing the agency of the Revenue department for registration work;
(d) extension of the process of photo-copying of documents to other areas; and
(e) the employment of pensioners as sub-registrars as in certain Provinces.

On examination, it was considered that item (c) was not feasible and that items (b) and (e) were not likely to result in real economy. As regards item (d), there are two systems in force, viz., the photo-stat and the cine film; and the Inspector-General of Registration has been asked to report on the comparative merits of the two systems by the 1st September 1938. The question of extending the system may be considered then.

Item (a) involves the reduction of the facilities now afforded to the public for registration of documents, and consequently and important question of policy. It has been left for the decision of the new Government. The Inspector-General has, however, been asked to submit to the Government, as and when occasion arises, proposals for the closure of any offices the retention of which he considers to be unnecessary.

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ANNEXURE G-V.

(see paragraph 38 of the report and item 5 in Annexure C-III).

Reduction in the number of sub-registry offices.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

The following suggestions have been made:-

(a) reducing the number of offices or giving them more work,
(b) concentration of work (as for instance in the Madras City) in one or two offices where such a course is possible,
(c) utilizing the agency of the Revenue Department for registration work,
(d) extension of the process of photo-copying of documents to other areas, and
(e) examination of the system prevailing in other Provinces and the feasibility of its adoption in the Madras Presidency- e.g., employment of pensioners as sub-registrars.

(a) Possibility of reducing the number of offices or giving them sufficient work toe justify their pay; The Inspector-General of Registration, while conceding that there are lightly worked offices, does not recommed any reduction in the number of offices on the ground that several of these Sub-Registrars exercise magisterial powers and attend to treasury work and that some are notaries public and are in charge of stamp depots. All the sub-registrars are also ex-officio registrars of births and deaths.

As regards the feasibility of giving the lightly worked officers more work, the Inspector-General suggested that the following items of work might be taken over by sub-registrars:-

(i) disposal of applications for transfer of registry,
(ii) disposal of applications for assignment of land and house-sites, and
(iii) disposal of cases under the Land Encroachment Act (Madras Act III of 1905).

The Board of Revenue was consulted and it was not agreeable to the suggestion and its remarks and extracted below:-

"The exercise of revenue functions by sub-registrars involves a measure of authority over village officers and revenue inspectors which the Board is unwilling to concede to officers of the Registration department. Further, sub-registrars would have to function also as dependent deputy tahsildars; and the Inspector-General of Registration is not likely to accept the position that his officers should be subordinate to tahsildars."

The Revenue Secretary's remarks on the proposal are appended below:-

"The Board's view may be accepted. The dual control which is involved in registration officers doing revenue work is undesirable."

The Finance Department agreed with the Revenue Department in regard to the question of entrusting to sub-registrars certain items of revenue work. As regards the reduction in the number of sub-registry offices, the Finance Secretary observed as follows:-

" ...From the statistics of registration for the various offices, the Inspector-General can easily see where there is a prima facie case for reduction in the number of offices. He can then examine the possibility of closing an office or two by re-distribution of the territorial limits of the remaining offices.

With reference to the above, the Revenue Secretary's note is extracted below:-

" There are two ways of improving the financial conditions in the Registration Department, (a) by increasing the fees- a matter which has been dealt with above and (b) by reducing the number of offices.

Both of these are matters of which will have to be left to the new Ministries under the Reforms for decision. I submit that until a Ministry decides to reduce the number of offices in order to make the department produce more revenue, it is unnecessary to give the Inspector-General of Registration the labour of examining the question of what offices could or could not be closed. If the Inspector-General starts an examination of this kind, it will become known that there is some idea of closing offices, and the Government and the Inspector-General are likely to be inundated with petitions from various localities urging this or that office should not be closed. This seems to be undesireble. The Inspector-General is alive to the necessity of recommending for closure unnecessary offices, as he has recently sent up proposals for the closure of two offices which the Collectors have proposed whould not be closed.

Arikkulam-Malabar district.
Tandarai-North Arcot district.

Until a Ministry decides that it wants to increase its revenue by reducing expenditure on registration by a closure of office- a policy against the desirability of which there are strong arguments- all that seems to be necessary is to tell the Inspector-General to submit to the Government where he considers it necessary any proposals which he has for the closure of individual offices."

P-T-R-31-1-37.

This suggestion was accepted both by the Hon'ble the Minister and the Finance Member.

(b) Concentration of work as for instance in the Madras City in one or two offices, where such a course is feasible:- The Inspector-General of Registration reported that concentration of work had been tried in the Madras City, Madura, Tanjore, Calicut, Coimbatore, etc., and that experience showed that the scheme was not successful and that the Government had to sanction the creation of new offices to meet the convenience of the parties. He considered that the advantages, if any, that might be obtained from concentration were more than counterbalanced by difficulties that would be caused both to the department and the public by such concentration.

This view was accepted by the Government and it has been decided not to pursue the suggestion further.

(c) Utilizing the agency of the Revenue Department:- Both the Board of Revenue and the Inspector-General of Registration who were consulted in the matter are against the proposal. The Board's reasons in support of its view are given below:-

(i) Tahsildars and Deputy Tahsildars are touring officers and cannot, therefore, exercise personal care over the registration records;

(ii) Stationary Sub-Magistrates are appointed only in areas where the quantum of magisterial work is so heavy as to require a whole-time officer;

(iii) Talik Sarishtadars and Head Accountants are already overworked and are in immediate charge of sub-treasury work and talik offices; and

(iv) the proposal involves a dual control over the officers- a scheme fundamentally objectionable and likely to lead to inter-departmental friction.

The Revenue Secretary's note on this is as hereunder:-

> " It seems pretty clear that Revenue officers cannot do registration work. They have not got the time. They had not the time even in 1884 (and work has increased markedly since then) and it was this that led to the establishment of the Registration department."

The Board's view was accepted by the Government.

(d) Extension of the process of photo-copying of documents to other areas:- The Inspector-General of Registration estimates the cost of the scheme for each district at Rs. 26,600 non-recurring made up as follows:-

	Rs.
Plant and machinery	6,752
Buildings	14,650
Cost of ten steel cabinets taking North Malabar Registration district as the standard at Rs.130 each	5,200
Total.	26,602

If the system is to be extended, the Inspector-General would extend it to North Malabar as this district has been working at a deficit. He would however defer the question until the Government decide as to which of the two methods of the photo-copying, i.e., cine-film or photostat- should be retained permanently, i.e., in September 1938, when a further report as to the financial results of the working of the systems now tried experimentally in certain districts, is due.

The following is the note of the Revene Secretary on this point:-

> "The Government so recently as in April 1936 decided to defer a decision on the mechanical systems of copying until further experience had been gained of the system for three more years. There is no reason for a modification of that decision.
>
> The question of introducing mechanical systems of copying is connected with the question of unemployment among the educated classes; and before deciding to introduce some mechanical copying system throughout the department, the Government will have to decide whether they are prepared to add to this unemployment problem by throwing large numbers of educated men out of work,
>
> This is an important question; and it may be left to be decided when the three years' further experimental period sanctioned in G.O. No. 908, Revenue, dated 23rd April 1936, terminates."

This view was accepted by the Finance Department, the Hon'ble the Minister in charge and the Hon'ble the Finance Member.

(e) Examination of the system prevailing in other Provinces and the feasibility of its adoption in the Madras Presidency---e.g.employment of pensioners as sub-registrars---The Inspector -General reported that in the Punjab there were honorary sub-registrars and that in Burma retired officers of the Registration department were entrusted with the duties of the sub-registrar. The Inspector-General,was however of the opinion that the employment of retired officers would greatly add to the already increasing unemployment among young men who are qualified and are easily available for appointment as sub-registrars.

From the point of vew of efficiency, it is considered that the employment of pensioners may not be a success. The most important argument against the employment of pensioners is that of consequent unemployment among educated young men. The Inspector-General's view

was therefore accepted. The Finance Department also concurred in this view. The Hon'ble the Minister and the Hon'ble the Finance Member have approved the Inspector-General's recommendation that no change in the existing system of appointment of sub-registrars is necessary.

H.R. Uzielli-24-2-37.

True Copy.

Office Assistant
Madras Record Office.
24/12

Notes

REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Registration Department-Reduction in the number of sub-Registry offices:-

From the Finance (Reorganisation Department) U.O. Note. 53595 A/47 Rev-1 dated 16-9-1947.

To

Additional Secretary to Government.

Please see the U.O. note from the Finance Department and its enclosures at pp 1-5 cf.

2.Of the five methods examined in 1937 for effecting a reduction in the number of Sub-Registry Offices, it was considered that item (c) was not feasible and that (b) and (e) were not likely to result in real economy.

3. As regards item (a) attention is invited to the notes on pp 171-175 cf G.O. No. 478 Rev dated 3-3-37 (B) and especially to the last para of Revenue Department note on pp 175-176 cf.

4. The question of effecting economies in the Registration Department arose in 1935 out of the fact that the expenditure under Registration was considerably higher than the revenue Collectors. In 1943 the stamp duties chargeable on certain documents have been enhanced and there has also been an enhancement in Registration fees in certain cases.

The figures for expenditure and income for 1935 and 1946 are given below:

	EXPENDITURE.	INCOME	
1935: Rs	33,08,938	33,05,607	Deficit Rs. 3331
1946:	13,54,950	77,40,169	Surplus Rs. 33,85,219.

The total income of the department for the triennium ending 1946 was Rs. 210.05 lakhs and the total expenditure during the triennium was Rs. 119.08 lakhs. Thus it will be seen that the Department is now working at a surplus and is fetching a considerable revenue to the Government.

5. In recent years due to the public being more enlightened and due to the general improvement in industry and commerce on account of the war there has been a gradual increase in the number of registered documents and there is agitation from the public for the opening of new sub-registry offices.

6. If at any place a need is felt for the opening of a sub-Registry office the Government examine the proposal in the light of the following considerations:

1) public convenience and particularly the distances to be traversed.
2) financial position with regard to its being a self supporting office and
3) administrative efficiency

Government sanction the proposal if they are satisfied on all these points.

7. As regards item (d) on p 2 cf:-

The photo-stat system of copying documents which was in existence in the Registration District of South Malabar was abolished fr from 1-4-1939 in G.O. 155 Rev. dated 21-1-1939 for the reasons stated in para 2 of the G.O.

The Cine film system of copying documents which was in vogue in the Madras, Chingleput district was abolished with effect from 1-10-41 in G.O. 1897 Rev. dated 19-8-41.

In a recent reference in file No.6051 C1/46 the Inspector General of Registration has stated that the revival of the photo-stat system cannot be considered at present as photo materials are still very costly and not easily available and that its success over "hand copying" cannot be ensured.

8.In the light of the considerations, it is submitted that it des not seem desirable to institute a general reduction in sub-registry offices especially as the Registration Department is no longer a liability to the Government.

In their up note on p 1 cf Finance enquire (1) what steps, if any, were taken subsequent to 1937 to effect economy in expenditure by reducing the number of sub-registry offices, and (2) to what extent economy can now be effected in that direction.

As regards (1) above attention is invited to the order on pp 195-198 of G.O. No. 478 Rev. dated 3.3. 1937 of the five methods considered for effecting a reduction in the number of sub-registry offices, only two were considered feasible Viz.-

(a) giving light offices more work or closing them,
(b) extension of the system of photo-copying of documents.

In regard to (a) the question was left to a future Ministry. At the same time the Inspector-General was asked to submit, as and when occasion arose proposals for the closure of any office the retention of which he considered to be unnecessary. Presumably the Inspector-General submitted proposals and a few offices were closed. The question does not appear to have been considered again after 1937. In view of the fact that the Registration Department is now working at a surplus it is perhaps unnecessary to consider the question now. As regards adopting the method (b) above, the photo-copying system has been discontinued altogether and the question does not therefore arise. Finance may be informed that in view of the fact that there is at present demand for more offices it is unnecessary to consider the question of reducing the number of sub-registry offices by adopting any of the methods considered in 1937.

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Sd. . . . . .

13.10.47

The U.O. Note on p 1 cf and the note of Rev. Department on pp 1-3 above may be perused. The remarks of Revenue Department have been called for on the matters referred to at 'Z' on p 2 above. These are noted on below:-

2. (1) Steps, if any, taken subsequent to 1937 to effect economies in expenditure by reducing the number of sub-registry offices:--

Of the five methods considered for effecting a reduction in the number of sub-registry offices, only two were considered feasible and they were left over for the consideration of the congress Government in 1937. The two methods are the following:-

(a) closing down light offices or giving them more work and reducing staff elsewhere; and
(b) extension of the process of photo-copying of documents to other areas.

(b) above: Revenue Department state that the photo-copying system has been discontinued and that the question of considering the method does not arise.

No remarks are called for in this Department.

(a) above: The Inspector-General was asked to submit to Government as and when occasion arose, proposals for the closure of any, offices the retention of which he considered to be unnecessary. Revenue Department presume that the Inspector-General of Registration submitted proposals and that a few sub-registry offices were closed. They state that the question does not appear to have been considered again after 1937 and that in view of the fact that the Registration Department is now working at a surplus, it is unnecessary to consider the question now.

The fact that the Registration Department is now working at a surplus does not seem to be a sufficient justification for not effecting economies in expenditure by closing down offices with light work or giving them more work and reducing staff elsewhere. A large number of new departments and appointments have been brought into existence during the war and after and the expenditure has swelled to a very great extent. The government have therefore reconstituted the Retrenchment and Reorganisation Committee to consider and report on, among others, the effecting of economes in expenditure and the reorganisation of Departments with a view to reducing cost and increasing efficiency. This Department may suggest that Revenue Department may take up the question with the Inspector-General of Registration and formulate definite proposals for consideration by the Committee.

3. Extent to which economy can be effected now by reducing the number of sub-Registry offices:-

Revenue Department state that in view of the fact there there is at present demand for more offices it is unnecessary to consider the question of reducing the number of sub-registry offices by adopting any of the methods considered in 1937. The fact that there is a demand for new offices does not prevent the examination of the possibility of abolishing existing light offices and merging them with other offices.

The case may be returned to Revenue Department with the request that further action may be taken by them with reference to 'Z' on page 4 above.

I don't think that we need definitely consider the question of reducing the number of offices unless the Reorganisation Committee recommends that this should be done. But information as to the number of offices in existence now and in 1937 (a list of new

offices opened and the offices closed during the interval) and and total strength of the staff employed may be useful. Totals can probably be got from the budget and the lists referred to at A may be obtained from the Inspector-General if Revenue cannot supply the information.

2. The Committee will no doubt want to have full information as to the advantages claimed for the photo-copying system and why it was discontinued. The pp may be obtained from Revenue.

3. Some ex-sub-registrar made certain suggestions which I think are being examined in Revenue. At what stage is the matter?

T.N.S.R
16.7.47

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REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

To

Additional Secretary.

Please see the notes from p 1 above .

2. Para 1 of Finance Additional Secretary's note above. The total number of sub-registry offices on 1-1-37 was 568- 93 in the Malabar, 169 in Telugu districts and 306 in Tamil districts. Subsequently the following changes took place either in the closure or opening of sub-registry offices in the Province:--

	Offices Opened.	Plus or Minus.
Tamil Districts.		
Offices closed or Converted into District Registrars' Office		
2 abolished and 2 converted into District Registrars' office	4	nil
Telugu Districts.		
3 converted into District Registrars' offices	7	+4
Malabar.		
1 abolished and 1 converted into District Registrars' Office	nil	-1
	Total	+3

Consequent on the above changes the total number of sub-registry offices in existence on 1-11-47 is 570 as follows:

Tamil Districts	306
Telugu Districts	173
Malabar	91

3. As regards the staff employed, only total figures for the districts as a whole are avialable in the budget estimate. Separate figures for the sub-registry offices are not given. Figures for the districts are given below:-

Sub-Registrars	629	(13 temporary)
Reserve sub-Registrars	74	
Clerks, Typists etc	2,155	(185 ")
Peons	1,342	(48 ")
Film Cementer	1	

4. Paras 2 and 3 of the Finance Additional Secretary's note at p 5 ante:- The suggestion referred to in para 3 of the note have been examined and the concerned file has been sent to Revenue, Education and Public Health and Finance with Revenue G.O. No. 1356 J/47-1 dated 20-10-47. The papers referred to in para 2 of the Finance Additional Secretary's note at p 5 ante are put up in that file . Finance may be requested to look intc those papers when the file is received by them.

5. With these remarks the file may be returned to Finance.

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Finance (Reorganisation) Dept.

(Previous Finance note on pp 3-5 above).

The further note of Revenue Department on pp.5-7 above may be perused. Revene have furnished the information required by Additional Secretary regarding the no.of offices in para 2 on page 5-6 above. They have not, however, given the strength of the establishment in 1937 as compared with 1947.

The number of officers etc in 1937 and 1947 is as follows:-

	As in 1937-38.	As in 1947-48.	Increase.
Sub Registrars	618 (6 ty)	629 (13 ty)	11
Reserve Sub-Registrars	74	74	-
Clerks, typist etc.	2000 (33 ty)	2155 (184 ty)	155
Peons.	1296 (9 ty)	1342 (48 ty)	46
Film Cementer	1 (ty)	1 (ty)	-
	3989	4201	212

2.PHOTO COPYING SYSTEM-. The question of extending the pho-stat system has been recently discussed in a Revenue Department file containing the suggestions for retrenchment made by certain retired Sub-Registrars. The Inspector General of Registration stated in that file that it was difficult to get photographic materials in the market for extension of the photo-stat system. The Revenue Secretary who visited recently the Sub-Registrar's office at Poonamalle expressed the view that photo-stat documents are getting fainter and fainter, as years pass by, as compared with hand written documents. He has also observed that the climatic conditions of this country are not suitable for preservation of photo-stat documents in good contition.

3.SUGGESTIONS MADE FOR RETRENCHMENT BY THREE RETIRED SUB REGISTARS:

The file on the subject was received separately by this Department and returned to Revenue. In that file the Revenue Department examined the suggestions are unworkable. They proposed to take orders in circulation.

4. For Orders whether the file may lie over until the Reorganisation Committee takes up the question of reduction in the number of sub registry offices - Cf. K on page 5 above.

Sd.. 17/11/1947.

Para 3 above: The file referred to above is linked. It has been ordered in circulation that no action is called for on the suggestions made by three retired sub-registrars.
This may lie over as suggested in para 4 above.

In view of the orders in circulation in the top file, it does not seem necessary to keep this file open further. The file may be closed. If the Revenue and Reorganisation Committee make any suggestions themselves in this regard, the question may then be further examined and put up before them for consideration.

With reference to 'Z' above the papers may be recorded for future reference.

G.O.MS.NO.83 Finance,dated 25-1-1948.

"R E C O R D E D".

Registration Department-
Reduction in the Number
of Sub-Registry offices
Papers recorded.

/True Copy/

OFFICE Assistant
Madras Record Office

*In consultation with the Board of Revenue and the Inspector of Registration and considered that the suggestions
General